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THE DICTATOR; OR TWO SCENES IN PARAGUAY.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Is the vicinity of the city of Assumption, the capital of Paraguay (that irregular country, which, from the policy of seclusion so long pursued by its government, has been termed the Japan of South America), are scattered many country-houses belonging to the more wealthy citizens, who retire thither when their business is over, to escape from the scorching heat and stifling dust of the open, unpaved streets. To many of these villas farms or plantations of considerable extent are attached, which, cultivated by servants, supply the market of the capital, and thus afford a revenue to the proprietors. It is to one of these mansions that we would transport the imagination of our readers; and as this power—namely, the imagination—is lord of time as well as of space, we shall expect it to bear us company as far back as a period of forty years ago, when Paraguay was under the sway of a Spanish governor appointed by the viceroy of Buenos Ayres. At that time there stood, about a league north of the little city of Assumption, a dwelling of small dimensions—in fact a mere cottage—but beautifully situated, and surrounded by fields of sugar-cane, maize, tobacco, and cotton, all in full cultivation. The house was built, after the fashion of the country, of sun-dried bricks, covered with plaster, and whitewashed. Along the front was a deep veranda, the pillars of which were slender stems of forest trees, stripped of their branches and bark, and whitewashed, but with many rough knots and inequalities where the boughs had been hewn off. These served to sustain the vines which, planted at their feet, ascended with many a winding clasp, and covered them with their luxuriant leaves. Then, reaching the roof of the veranda, the vines spread and interlaced, until the whole was buried in a mass of verdant foliage, which contrasted beautifully with the snow-white walls of the cottage and the ruddy tiles of the sloping eaves. In the rear of the cottage was a long, low building, appropriated to the servants and the offices, and extending to a corral, or enclosure, in which the cattle and horses were kept. Directly in front of the porch were two tall trees, of the tatayiba, or wild mulberry, with slender stems and a profusion of light, glossy leaves; while before, and on each side of the house, was an orchard, or it might rather be called a thicket, of fruit-trees. The broad dark leaf of the fig hardly allowed its abundant fruit, in all stages of growth, to meet the eye, but the sunny orange and yellow lime gleamed from the depths of their verdant canopy, like—to use the odd but striking simile of honest Andrew Marvell—

‘Like golden lamps in a green night.’

It was late in the evening. The full unclouded moon shone on the scene here described, lighting up the white walls of the humble cottage and the verdant masses of the orange grove. The tall sugar-cane and the rustling maize-stalks waved their tasselled heads and slender leaves in the soft night-wind. Now and then might be heard the sullen hooting of a distant owl, or the harsh scream of a paroquet disturbed in its uneasy slumbers. All other sounds were hushed. The cattle were asleep in the corral, the fowls at roost on their accustomed trees. From the darkness and silence which prevailed, it appeared that all the inhabitants of the cottage were at rest, except in one room, which was lighted up, and into which we will make bold to enter. It was very simply furnished, as is usual throughout Spanish America. The brick floor was covered with fine straw matting. To the whitewashed walls were fastened a few ordinary pictures and engravings. Some light cane chairs were placed around the room, and at the farther end was an elevated dais or *estrada*, covered with the skins of the jaguar and puma, and serving as a lounge for visitors, or a couch for the siesta or afternoon nap. In the centre of the room was a table, made of the wood of the urandig-pitai, a native tree equal to the finest rosewood. Two candles stood upon it, and numerous papers—some folded, and tied with tape, others open—were scattered over it.

A young man sat beside the table, deeply engaged in the perusal of one of the documents. He was dressed like a wealthy *haciendado*, or gentleman farmer. His jacket of blue cloth was adorned with silver buttons, hanging by little chains of an inch in length. His vest of white satin, elegantly tamboured, was open so as to show the embroidered front of his cambric shirt. His green velvet small-clothes, tied round the waist by a blue satin sash, were loose at the knee, allowing the ruffled ends of his muslin drawers to appear beneath them. They were met by white cotton stockings, and buskin boots of untanned horse-skin. The age of the wearer was apparently about twenty-five. He had the brown complexion, the dark eyes, the black, glossy hair, the thick beard and mustaches, which were proper to his Spanish descent. His handsome features wore an expression of deep sadness, and his brow was occasionally knit, as with indignation, while his eye glanced over the paper which he held. Just behind him, in another chair, but leaning on the back of his, with her eyes fixed earnestly on his face, sat a young woman of extreme beauty both of form and feature. It was a style of beauty, too, which is commonly thought peculiar to northern, or rather to cold climates, but which is, in fact, frequently seen in the interior of South America. Her chestnut hair clustered in natural ringlets round her fair face, and her dark blue eyes looked out with changeable lustre from beneath their

long brown eyelashes. Her slender form, betokening extreme youth, was attired in a simple robe of white muslin, bound at the waist by a ribbon, which was clasped with a golden buckle. It was easy to see that the natural expression of her countenance was bright and cheerful, as of one accustomed to a life of great happiness; but at this moment her look was constrained and anxious, and her eyes were fixed earnestly upon the young man, whose attention was engrossed by the manuscripts. At last she spoke, as if unable to endure the silence.

'Do you think there is any hope, Enrique?'

The young man started, and throwing from him the papers which he held, exclaimed in a tone of mournful bitterness, 'What a fool am I to pore over these long-winded pleas, rejoinders, judgments, and all their legal trash, as if they could have any influence on my cause! Do I not know that it was lost from the beginning! It is gold that has done it all—bribery, corruption! The pleading of an angel would not avail against such arguments. We are lost—utterly ruined!'

'Surely, Enrique,' replied his companion, 'the judge cannot allow his friendship for Don Manuel to bias him to so frightful a degree? All the city knows that Prieto's claim to your patrimony is utterly unfounded; and your evidence, too, is so strong.'

'Listen, Rosita,' said the young man, 'to what I heard this morning from my friend Gomez. How Gomez learned the facts, he would not inform me; but he assured me that I might rely upon them. A year ago, when Don Manuel Prieto gave his daughter in marriage to young Echeverria, he said to him, "Carlos, choose which you will of my houses in town, or my estates in the country, for your residence, and it is yours." Echeverria answered, "I will not rob you of any of your splendid residences or your great plantations. Give me only a little cottage, with an orchard and a few fields about it, like that of Enrique Gonzalez, and I shall be happy." Then Prieto said, "If that be all you require, you shall have the very house and farm you speak of." Thereupon he came to me and offered me a large price for the property—its full worth, and even more. I refused, instantly and positively, to sell my patrimony, which was endeared to me by the recollections of childhood. Why should I part with it at any price? Besides, Rosita, it was at that very time that I was preparing to lead you, my lovely, blushing bride, from your own happy home to the house of my fathers. Was that a time to sell my homestead? I told the old man flatly that all his fortune would not tempt me. Now, this is what I learn from Gomez. When Prieto returned home, he was bursting with fury at his failure, inasmuch as he had given his word to his son-in-law, and had expected that his doubletons would accomplish everything. He swore a solemn oath, that if it cost him his whole fortune, he would have my house and land, and that I should yet beg of him a pittance to save me from starvation.'

'Santa Maria!—Blessed Virgin! Can this be?' exclaimed the young wife in astonishment.

'This—this,' continued Gonzalez, 'is the origin of this sudden and outrageous suit, which at first I considered to be intended only for my annoyance, and as a mode of petty revenge. But it now appears too clearly that he is determined to push it to extremity; and his measures have been taken with such consummate skill, that no resource is left to me. The judge is gained. Every advocate has his retaining fee. I have even begun to doubt my own paid lawyer, Ramirez, who has suddenly become very cautious and cold.'

'Ramirez! He leagued with the enemy! Oh, Enrique, surely your suspicions mislead you?'

'I fear—I greatly fear: at all events he gives me no hope.'

'And is there no one,' asked Rosita, 'whom you can trust?'

'Not one of the whole court,' replied her husband in a tone of despair. 'The only advocate who cannot be bribed, and of whom lawyers and judges alike stand in awe, has long been my implacable enemy.'

'The Dr Francia?'

'Yes; ever since that unhappy affair of Gomez and Paredes. I remember well the terrible scowl he wore when he said to me, "You have wilfully crossed my path; you have injured one who never forgives a favour or an offence." Since that time, he has done all in his power—openly and fairly I admit—to thwart, annoy, and injure me. Nor have I been slow, I confess it, to retaliate. He is an intimate friend of Prieto's. Oh how he must exult in my approaching ruin!'

'Not, surely,' said Rosita, 'if he be the honest, upright man he is proclaimed to be. His integrity must revolt at such injustice.'

'There are many esteemed very honest,' replied Gonzalez, 'who will rejoice in a result attained by evil means, provided they are not responsible for the evil-doing. But,' he continued, rising from his chair, and pacing the room with hasty steps, 'what is it to me who exults or who laments over my unhappy fate? What is certain is, that in three days we are driven forth, to beg or starve, from this house, in which I fondly hoped to spend a long and happy life with thee, my beloved. Ah, Rosita! what day-dreams have been mine of the pleasant future which awaited us here, but which will never be ours to enjoy! It is not for myself that I grieve. I can struggle with the current. But when I think that I have drawn you from the peaceful shelter of your paternal roof in Villa Rica to this distant city, to share in my desperate fortunes, I am ready to go mad with remorse and rage.'

'And this is the way you treat me!' replied the young wife in an offended tone. 'When I, poor, foolish creature, was thinking that my presence and my love would be some alleviation to your misfortune, you do your best to distress me by calling them an aggravation. Come here, sir,' she continued, seizing him by the hand, and pulling him with gentle force to a chair by her side—'sit down by me, you treacherous man, and tell me what you married me for. Was it only to have me in your house like a great doll, prettily dressed, for a plaything and a show? Or was it merely that I might keep you company, and entertain your friends in *tertulias*,* and make your *maté*† and see that your clothes were in order, and your dinners well cooked? No, sir; your *ama de llaves*‡ did these things quite as well as I. Well, then, was it to be your helpmate, to love you in joy and in sorrow, to comfort you, to toil for you, to pray for you, to believe that there was no unhappiness where you were, and to make you believe so too? Oh, Enrique! you do not know me. You are a man: well, am not I a woman?'

'You are an angel, I believe,' said Enrique, interrupting her rapid speech by clasping her round the waist.

'Let me alone. I say I am a woman: and are there

* Evening parties.

† Paraguay tea, made from the leaves of a tree peculiar to that country.

‡ Housekeeper; literally, mistress of keys.

not poor women as well as poor men? And do not women have to toil and suffer as much as men? Yes, truly, and a great deal more. Now, Enrique, said the lovely pleader, leaning with her clasped hands on her husband's shoulder, and looking fondly in his face, 'listen to my plan, which I have formed while you were poring over your musty papers. When we leave our dear home, which I shall regret as much as you, for I have had my day-dreams too, Enrique'—and a tear, unbidden, stood in her bright blue eye—'but when we leave it, you shall hire a little hut, and a little piece of ground, such as we can find for twenty dollars a-year, like that which old Antonio lives in—the old Mulatto, who talks all the time with his Indian wife, who never says anything: just like me, you know.'

'But where are we to find our twenty dollars, you dear little St Tacita?' interrupted Enrique, smiling in spite of himself.

'Hush with your impertinent inquisitions. You are worse than a lawyer. Why, my earnings are worth more than sixty dollars; so there is three years' rent at once. You shall cultivate the ground, and raise your yams, your maize, and your pine-apples, your water-melons and your musk-melons, your sugar-cane, and, above all, your cotton; while I shall take care of the house—which wont be much, you know; and then I will pick and card your cotton, and spin and weave it, and cut it, and make it up, and tambour it so, that the governor himself shall be only too happy to give a hundred dollars for a shirt from my fingers. Moreover, every Saturday I will go into the market, like the other *paisanas*,* with my donkey, and my panniers filled with all the good fruits that you will raise, and all the nice and pretty things that I can make—my tarts and pies, my bouquets, my toys and *cigarrillos*†. Ah, I think I see myself in a corner of the market-house, in my white petticoat and embroidered vest, with my little *rebozo*‡ on my head, seated in state on my mat, with all my wares about me. I am sure I shall draw all the custom. Buy a water-melon, senor? Buy my candles, *senorita*—elegant mould candles? Here's your nice new-laid eggs! Here's your beautiful onions! Here's your fine white yams—yams—yams! Ah, buy a pie, *ma'am*, baked this morning, I assure you; or a bunch of elegant flowers, for the dear good saint;§ or a sweet pretty little doll for the charming little *senorita*; or a little whip for the dear little *senorito* to whip his beautiful little horse with? The lively Rosita mimicked so admirably the tones and manner of the market-women of Assumption, that her husband shouted 'Bravo!' and clapped his hands, and laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks. It was a delightful scene; and it ended by his clasping once more his lovely wife to his bosom, and thanking Heaven that he had one treasure of which Prieto could not deprive him.

At this moment they were startled by a loud knock at the outer door. 'Who can it be at this hour?' said Enrique.

'Some messenger from the city perhaps,' replied his wife. 'Here, Rossi,' she said, opening the door of the apartment, 'go and see who it is that knocks.'

Rossi, their trusty Mulatto servant, who was nodding in the passage, arose, rubbed his eyes, yawned, and proceeded to obey the commands of his mistress. He returned in a minute with his eyes wide open, and every trace of drowsiness banished by consternation. 'Oh, *senor*! oh, *mistress*!' he stammered; 'it is that man, Dr Francia! Shall I let him in?'

Rossi knew well the inveterate enmity between his master and the doctor, which was indeed notorious to

all the city and neighbourhood. 'Dr Francia!' exclaimed Gonzalez, no less astonished, and much perplexed. 'What can he want with me?'

'Perhaps he comes from Don Manuel to propose some compromise,' suggested his wife. 'Pray see him by all means.'

'Well, Rossi, desire the doctor to enter. We shall know our fate.'

Rossi returned to the door, and shortly afterwards a hasty step was heard in the passage, and the person of whom they spoke entered the room. His tall erect form was clad from head to foot in scholastic black, with the exception of his ample cloak of crimson cloth, which was wrapped around his shoulders after the Spanish fashion. He might be above forty years of age. His face was long, with strongly-marked features; thin lips firmly closed, dark piercing eyes, and a swarthy complexion, but with that peculiar tinge of sallowness acquired by close confinement and study. His dark hair was drawn back from his capacious forehead, and fell in heavy masses on his shoulders. His whole physiognomy conveyed a strong impression of intellect and firmness. He waited for no salutation, but spoke at once. 'Senor Don Enrique, I know that my presence here is as unwelcome as it is unexpected.'

'I am honoured,' began Gonzalez; but the doctor interrupted him with a hasty motion of the hand.

'I do not come to bandy compliments, *senor*; but on an errand of duty. You are now engaged in a suit with my friend Don Manuel Prieto (he pronounced the word 'friend' with a strong emphasis), by which you are about to lose this house and estate. From what I learn, it appears that his suit is an atrocious outrage on law and justice, and is likely to be gained by a violation of every legal and honest principle. Is this the truth, *senor*?'

'It is,' replied Gonzalez eagerly, 'as surely as that there is a just God in heaven!'

'This must not be, Don Enrique,' replied Dr Francia. 'I cannot allow the law, that noble science to which I have devoted my life, to be so perverted to an engine of fraud and oppression. I am the friend of Don Manuel; I am, and shall ever be, your enemy. But I am more the friend of right, and the enemy of wrong. I offer you my services. Will you trust me with your cause?'

'With my life!' exclaimed Gonzalez, astonished and overjoyed. 'Oh, *senor*, under what a load of obligation do you lay me!'

'Under none,' returned the lawyer hastily. 'I serve the cause of justice. We are enemies now and ever!'

'Surely, *senor*, not now?' exclaimed Rosita. 'Not after this?'

'Madam,' replied the doctor coldly, 'neither my friendships nor my enmities are like a cloak, to be put on and off at pleasure, and thrown aside when worn out. These, I perceive, are your documents,' he continued, sweeping from the table the pile of papers which lay upon it, and collecting them under his arm within his cloak. 'Have no further anxiety, Don Enrique; your cause is safe. I do not think that Don Pedro de Sarmiento will dare to trifle with me!' he said proudly, drawing up his stately form to its full height. 'Let him beware: if he turns to the right or left, he is lost. Judge of appeal as he is, royal auditor as he styles himself, I will drag him from his seat to ignominy and ruin. What! is it come to this, that a corrupt judge and venal advocates shall twist the law with impunity to their own vile ends, and rob us of our fortunes without redress? I, José Gaspar Francia, say that this thing shall not be. Farewell, sir; I repeat it, your patrimony is safe. Adieu, *madam*; I kiss your feet; and bowing with ceremonious politeness, the great lawyer abruptly turned, and departed as hastily as he had come. He left behind him glad hearts and joyous countenances.

'How much better are the grim doctor's acts than his words!' said Rosita. 'Surely he cannot be in earnest when he speaks of enmity?'

'Dr Francia seldom speaks in jest,' replied Enrique;

* Peasant women.

† Little cigars made of tobacco, cut fine, and wrapped in a slip of paper or maize leaf.

‡ A sort of scarf, thrown over the head or round the neck at the pleasure of the wearer.

§ It is common throughout Spanish America to have an image of the patron saint in the best room of the house, and great care is taken in dressing and adorning it with jewels and garlands.

'but what matters his enmity after this? I defy him to do me as much harm hereafter as he now does me good!'

Ill-founded confidence! Alas! there came a time when Gonzales would have given house and land, and all his hopes of worldly prosperity, to buy even the miserable boon of eternal banishment from the country in which Dr Francia dwelt!

SCENE THE SECOND.

Twelve years have elapsed since the scene just described. We must now ask our readers to accompany us to the Casa de Gobierno, or government house, in the city of Assumption, the capital of the free and independent republic of Paraguay. It is a large low edifice of whitewashed brick, with no pretensions to elegance or state. At one extremity of it is a room of moderate size, very poorly furnished. A long table which occupied the upper end, close to the wall, supported a double row of books, and several astronomical and surveying instruments. At a small round table, in the centre of the room, was seated a youth of pleasing intelligent appearance, engaged in writing; while a tall elderly man, dressed in black, but with a crimson cloak thrown around his shoulders, walked slowly up and down the room in deep thought. It was Francia, no longer a simple doctor of laws and advocate, but, by the election of his fellow-citizens, and the force of his indomitable will, supreme dictator of Paraguay, the absolute ruler of the country. There was little change to be perceived in his appearance, except that his hair was slightly grizzled, and his countenance gloomier than ever. At length the young man ceased writing, and after glancing timidly towards the stern dictator, as if to ask permission, he said, 'May it please your excellency, the letter is finished.'

'Read it,' said Francia.

The young man read the document, which was a letter directed to the public authorities of Buenos Ayres, positively refusing to enter into any treaty, either of commerce or alliance, with them. When he had concluded, the dictator said, 'Very good. Transcribe it, and bring it to me for my signature. You have a good style, Villarino, and your compositions please me.'

'Ah, your excellency,' stammered the youth, much gratified by a speech of commendation from his stern master, 'if the supreme would but allow me to speak.'

'Well, what is it?' inquired Francia, turning and directing a piercing gaze at his secretary.

'I am proud to obey your excellency's commands, whatever they may be,' said the young man; 'but may I not venture to express a wish that my honoured master would regard the foreign policy of our country in a somewhat different light?'

'Well, go on!' said the dictator in a deep harsh tone, observing that the secretary hesitated.

'I shall be miserable if I offend your excellency,' continued the young man; 'I only thought, that possibly, without perplexing ourselves by foreign alliances, we might cultivate an advantageous commerce by exchanging our surplus productions for their cheap and useful wares.'

'Have you finished your lecture?' inquired Francia with a tone of bitter sarcasm, and a ferocious scowl.

'Ah, pardon!—pardon!' exclaimed the unwary youth; 'I meant not to offend.'

'When I took you for my secretary,' continued the unrelenting dictator, 'and favoured you by my countenance, I trusted that you had at least the sense not to burn your fingers by thrusting them wilfully into the fire. So you are a political economist, señor! and aspire to be a partner in my government. Do you know how I treat such intermeddlers?'

'Pardon my folly, my lord!' cried the youth, still more and more terrified. 'I will never offend again!'

'Out! away with you!' thundered Francia, stamping violently on the floor. 'Quit my presence now and for ever! Remain in your house till further orders. I will take care that you never repeat the offence.'

The unfortunate secretary slunk terror-stricken from the room, while the excited dictator paced up and down like an enraged tiger in his lair. His eyes glared, and his brow was knit. 'Shall I never find a tool,' he said, 'who will not erect himself into an adviser?' Suddenly the door opened. 'Ha! thou villain, wouldst thou assassinate me?' cried the despot, rushing to the table, on which lay two loaded pistols and a drawn sword.

'Oh, Señor Excelentissimo, it is only your poor servant,' said the new-comer in a piteous tone, dropping on his knees; 'I thought I heard your lordship's excellency bid me enter.'

'Ha, Estevan! is it thou? Beware how thou rushest so hastily into my presence, or thou mayest chance to repent it with a bullet in thy fat carcase. Well, what news?'

The person addressed was a little, plump, round-faced man, with an air of good-humour and sly cunning on his oily features. He might be, from his appearance, a small shopkeeper, or perhaps a publican. Scratching his head, as if to collect his scattered senses from the shock of his first reception, he replied, 'I have not much to tell your excellency, but I learn that Don Domingo Saavedra and Don Vicente Valdez meet frequently, and in private, at the house of Don Fernando Pinto.'

'Ha! well, that corresponds!' said Francia. 'What more?'

'Manuel Artigas says, that if you compel him to pull down his house to form your new street, he shall expect compensation.'

'He shall have it—free lodgings in the public prison. I will have no grumbings at my plans for the improvement of my capital. Anything more?'

'The old Pelado says that you can drive out the Franciscans to-day, but your own turn may come to-morrow.'

'He says so?—the scoundrel! I have long borne with his mutinous expressions. Good! No one suspects you of communicating with me, Estevan?'

'No, your excellency; thanks to my little office and my management.'

'Well, go! Be faithful, and you shall meet with your reward.'

The spy departed, and the dictator ringing a bell, a sergeant of the guard entered. 'Sergeant,' said Francia, 'you will take a file of men, and arrest Manuel Artigas without delay, and commit him to the public prison. This will serve him for lodgings while his house is pulled down, and teach him discretion. Tell him so. You will then proceed to seize the old Spaniard, Ruiz Palacios, commonly called the Pelado; iron him with a double bar, and have him ready for the banquillo* to-morrow morning, as a warning for all traitors.'

'Yes, your excellency. I have to report that the French merchant, Latour, is at the point of death. He is with his family at the house of his father-in-law, Don Pedro Cortina.'

'Very well. Place a guard in the dwelling, and also in his warehouse, and the moment he dies, seize his property for the use of the state. Our treasury is getting low; and whatever happens, my faithful troops, who love me like children, shall not want their pay. You may go, sergeant.'

The soldier departed on his errands of terror, enchanted with the favour shown by his master to the body to which he belonged, and by means of which the crafty despot secured his ascendancy over his fellow-citizens, and maintained his arbitrary power. A low knock was then heard; and after a reiterated command to enter, the door was gently opened, and a man appeared, dressed in the garb of a cura, or parish priest. His face was pale, and his look constrained and downcast.

* The 'little bench' or stool on which criminals are seated for execution.

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'Well, Pai* Melindez, what word from your penitent?' inquired the supreme.

'Dona Teresa informs me that, from the expressions let fall by her lover, she is more than ever convinced that some plot is going on in which Saavedra and Vicente Valdez are concerned. But she cannot acquire any certainty with regard to their designs.'

'Have you warned her that her salvation depends on bringing you a full and accurate report of all she sees and hears on the subject?'

'Yes, your excellency.'

'Well, then, I warn you, Pai Melindez, that your salvation—do you understand?—depends on your bringing me a full report of all you see and hear on that and every other subject.'

'Yes, your excellency; I endeavour to do my duty,' answered the poor priest submissively. 'I was this evening at the country-house of Don Enrique Gonzalez, where there was a large tertulia, to celebrate the recovery of his charming wife, after the birth of their fourth child. A lovely family is that of Don Enrique.'

'Pah!' interrupted the dictator with a scowl. 'What is this trash about lovely children and charming wives, with which you are stuffing my ears? Beware, Senor Cura; tell me what is important for me to know, and remember that I have other sources of information to check you if you play me false.'

'Don Enrique spoke of your excellency, and of the noble manner in which you rescued his patrimony from the clutches of his villainous enemies.'

'Ha! well?'

'He said that he could not conceive how the Dictator Francia and Dr Francia the advocate should be the same man.'

'Don Enrique has a feeble imagination,' said the despot in a dry sarcastic tone. 'Well, what else? There was more of it?'

'Yes, your excellency,' replied the unhappy priest, twitching at the sleeve of his cassock, and hesitating with a look of distress; 'he said that if you continued to add to your prisons, and the number of their inmates, you would shortly not have subjects at large sufficient to guard those in confinement.'

'He said that!' exclaimed Francia, pausing for a moment. 'The fool! The senseless, babbling idiot! I have spared him so long, because I considered him too weak an enemy to deserve more than contempt. And yet, not appreciating my clemency, he must talk!—must express his idle, worthless opinions about my state policy, and do his best to excite disaffection against me. He shall learn, and his associates shall take warning, that I have yet faithful subjects enough to keep watch over all traitors. Begone, Sir Priest!'

The curate departed, and the little tinkling bell summoned a sentinel, whom Francia directed to call the Captain Orbeago. In a few minutes the captain made his appearance—a ruffianly-looking soldier, with immense whiskers and mustaches, and dressed in a blue uniform, with red facings, a blue sash, and epaulets. He held in his hand a letter, which the dictator instantly remarked.

'Ah! A petition from my children—my soldiers?' he inquired.

'No, your excellency; it is a letter which was found on the table of poor Villarino. They have just brought his body home from the river.'

'What! drowned?' exclaimed Francia astonished; and snatching the letter, he tore it open, and read, as follows:—

'TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE SUPREME DICTATOR.

'It is now two years since your excellency deigned to cast your eyes on me, and consider my poor abilities worthy of your service. I appeal with con-

fidence to your excellency to attest the fidelity, the assiduity with which I have devoted myself to the duties of my office. For a single inconsiderate observation, intended for the benefit not less of your government than of our common country, I am driven from your presence, and threatened with the same doom which has overtaken so many worthier citizens before me. I understood but too well the meaning of your excellency's last words. But the name of Villarino shall never, through me, be sullied by the infamy of the banquillo or the state-prison. I do but anticipate my fate, which was sure to overtake me. I spare you the annoyance—may I say the pain?—of directing my punishment. In return, I will venture to hope that, if hereafter any member of my family should be so unfortunate as to incur your displeasure, you will pardon him, remembering that you have already had one voluntary victim in the unhappy JOAQUIN VILLARINO.'

The letter fell from the hands of the dictator. An unthought expression of regret lingered for a moment on his harsh countenance; but it soon passed away, and recovering himself, he observed, loud enough for the captain to hear him, 'The poor fool must needs meddle with matters above his sphere; and finding that his impertinence offends me, he sees fit to leap into the river. Well, so be it. Perhaps he is right. He has saved me trouble. Sooner or later, it must have come to this. No government can endure the officious interference of unqualified subjects, and it is necessary,' he continued, looking steadily at the officer, who quailed beneath his glance, 'to repress it by any means whatsoever. Orbeago, you will take with you twenty dragoons, and proceed to the house of Don Enrique Gonzalez: arrest him instantly; drag him, if need be, out of his bed; convey him to the prison in your barracks; have him heavily fettered, and place him in the dungeon heretofore occupied by Pedro Garcia, who died this morning. There let him rot, as a warning to all impertinent babblers who cannot restrain their tongues from wagging on forbidden subjects. Go!'

The officer made his obeisance, and departed. The dictator, seating himself quietly at the table, lighted a cigar, and was soon absorbed in a book, utterly regardless of the misery which in a few short hours he had spread around him.

Some of our readers may share in the doubt of poor Gonzalez—whether it can be possible that the bold, upright, incorruptible advocate described in the first of these scenes, could have become the heartless wily dictator, the suspicious tyrant, who has just been seen ruling a miserable people through the agency of hireling troops, of degraded spies, of jailors and executioners, and all the customary apparatus of despotism. Those of them, however, who have read the admirable 'Letters on Paraguay' by the Messrs Robertson, will be aware that all the important incidents of the narrative are strictly true; the only liberties here taken with them being in the minor details and descriptive portions of the story. The Dictator Francia is one of a long list of examples which prove the baneful effect of arbitrary power on the possessor. Before he became the ruler of Paraguay, he was esteemed the only man in the country fitted to govern it—so high was the confidence in his sagacity, his firmness, and, above all, his integrity. Had he not been trusted with unlimited command, it is probable that he would have made a most excellent executive governor. But having once acquired a dictatorial power, his unbounded pride and ambition incited him to use every effort to retain it. Then followed a pretorian soldiery, an all-pervading espionage, severe exactions to supply a failing treasury—rebellions, conspiracies, proscriptions—the dungeon, the torture, the ignominious death. Such, by the teaching of history, and the experience of all nations, is the regular and inevitable sequence of results which flow from the establishment of an irresponsible authority. No benevolence is so hearty, no honesty so pure, no humility so lowly, as not to yield at last to the

* *Pai*, which signifies 'father' in the Guarani or native Paraguayan tongue, is the term by which priests are usually addressed in that country.

engrossing sway of the passion for domination. It is therefore no exaggeration to say that the restraints of constitutional forms are, at least, quite as valuable to rulers as to their subjects; for if the latter have to fear the injurious effects of arbitrary power upon their external and temporal prosperity, the former have still more to dread its subtle and lasting influence upon themselves.

RIISING AND SINKING OF LAND IN NORTHERN EUROPE.

IN the temperate regions of the earth, we are so accustomed to associate the idea of perfect stability with the ground on which we tread, that we are prone to incredulity when told of upheavals of the land, which cannot be immediately referred to the action of volcanoes or earthquakes. And when travellers have witnessed one of the latter convulsions for the first time, their description of their sensations presents a singular mixture of bewilderment and alarm, jostling long-settled convictions. Startling, however, as may be the phenomena of earthquakes, the subsidence or elevation of hills, draining or formation of lakes, diversion of rivers, they only represent on the sudden what has in all time been effected by the slow and silent, though not less sure, operations of nature in various parts of the world. That such changes have taken place in past ages, many persons are willing to believe; but they incline to doubt the existence of similar movements in the present period. They have heard or read of beds of marine shells being found at elevations and places far remote from the sea, or of ancient vessels dug up far below the soil; but these things have been conveniently referred to the Deluge, or some sudden inundation, under the impression that since those events no farther commotion has happened. But the observations of scientific men testify to the alterations continually going on over large portions of the earth's surface, not less remarkable than those due to the violence of earthquakes.

Mr Lyell was the first to make these phenomena popularly known in this country, in his 'Principles of Geology,' a work which we are greatly pleased to see republished in a *seventh* edition, abounding as it does with sound and comprehensive views likely to do good service to the cause of geological science. This writer directed attention to the gradual elevation of the land in Sweden and adjacent portions of the north of Europe; and a summary of his observations, as amplified in the new edition, will serve to convey an idea of what is known of this interesting phenomenon.

We may premise that instances of upheaval and submergence are more general than is commonly supposed. Many changes of level are to be traced in the valley of the Rhine. In Sicily, shells, identical with those now existing in the Mediterranean, are found at a height of three thousand feet above the sea level. Calabria presents similar appearances. The latter country, it is thought, is slowly rising—a point not yet determined, owing to the comparatively short period during which observations have been made. In the bay of Baia, fish are now caught on certain parts of the coast, which, in 1807, were dry land: the depression goes on at the rate of one inch in four years. Places on the coast of Asia Minor are slowly increasing their distance from the sea; and according to Von Hoff, a German writer, the island of Tahiti gains in height every year. Mr Darwin has shown that the bed of the Pacific Ocean has undergone frequent upheavals and depressions, the coral reefs being sometimes elevated into mountain-ranges, at others sunk fathoms below the level at which they were formed. In 1822, a portion of the South American continent, equal in extent to the British isles, was raised; and similar movements are still going on. To turn to our own country: The town of Brighton once stood, where the chain-pier is now built, on a beach which the sea had abandoned for ages. In Shetland and Cornwall great changes have occurred within the memory of man.

Evidences of upheaval are apparent on some parts bordering the estuary of the Clyde. In the Isle of Arran a circle of inland cliffs is distinctly visible. A large portion of Lincolnshire was once covered by the sea, where cattle now graze; while on the opposite coast of Yorkshire, towns which were busy ports in the fourteenth century, are now covered by the waves. At one part of the Norfolk shore there is a depth of water sufficient to float a frigate, where, fifty years ago, stood a cliff fifty feet in height.

Many other facts might be adduced, were more required, to prove the existence of constant change. The results may appear small, when compared with the agencies at work, and the long ages required to produce them; yet when looked at as the means by which nature provides for the duration of her empire, we shall find reason to estimate them at their full value.

About the beginning of last century, Celsius, a celebrated Swedish naturalist, gave it as his opinion that the waters of the North and Baltic seas were slowly subsiding, the decrease amounting to nearly four feet in one hundred years. The fact he showed had been noticed by ancient writers, according to whom Scandinavia was formerly an island, but towards the ninth century had become part of the continent by the retreating of the waters. In common, however, with the early astronomers, who were deceived by *apparent* motions of the stars, so these writers, and Celsius himself, were deceived by the apparent subsidence of the sea. The speculations gave rise to a controversy, in which it was argued that as there was no proof of a rising of the ocean in other regions, there could be no sinking in the north. Playfair suggested that the appearances were due rather to an elevation of the land—an opinion confirmed by Von Buch, who, after exploring Sweden in 1807, expressed his conviction 'that the whole country, from Frederickshall in Norway to Abo in Finland, and perhaps as far as St Petersburg, was slowly and insensibly rising.' This declaration from so eminent an authority led to a more critical examination of the subject. Marks had been chiselled in the rocks on various parts of the Baltic shores, to serve as an index of the water-level. These were inspected by a commission in 1820-21, and a report was presented to the Royal Academy of Stockholm, in which the subsidence of the water, subsequently to the incision of the marks, was clearly demonstrated; at the same time new marks were made.

In 1834, Mr Lyell set out for Sweden, to convince himself, by actual observation, of the truth or falsehood of the theory advanced. He first visited the famous castle of Calmar: the bases of two projecting towers were once washed by the sea, but now they are above the sea-level, having risen four feet in as many centuries. He also examined the marks cut by direction of the commission in 1820-21, and found them in all cases from four to five inches above the surface of the water, which, when first cut, they exactly indicated; and after careful consideration of the facts, and inquiry among the most eminent Swedish engineers, assured himself that the evidence in favour of a rise of the land was altogether conclusive. The absence of tides in the Baltic, and the peculiar configuration of the coasts of Sweden and Norway, render the determination of the upheaval a comparatively easy task. On reference to a map of those countries, a range of small islands will be seen a short distance from the mainland, and following its indentations; these islands, locally termed *skär* (*chair*), are rocky and precipitous, and by repelling the violence of the waves, leave the space within comparatively calm. The natives take advantage of this circumstance for their short coasting voyages; and by passing frequently through the intricate channels, become perfectly acquainted with every rock. Notwithstanding the slowness of the upward movement, it is sufficient to derange the navigation: channels are narrowed, twisted, or altogether filled up. Rocks which formerly were sunken, are now several feet above the

surface of the water, and, by the resort of sea-birds and other accumulations, in time are converted into islands. As the process goes on, the hollows between dry up, and become pastures surrounded by fir-clad cliffs. Instances of this transformation have occurred, within the memory of living witnesses, both on the eastern and western coasts of Sweden. With regard to this change, Mr Lyell observes, 'My attention was frequently called to low pastures from one to three miles inland, where the old inhabitants or their fathers remembered that boats and ships had sailed. The traveller would not have suspected such recent conversions of sea into *terra firma*; but there are few regions where a valley newly gained from the sea may so rapidly assume an air of considerable antiquity. Every small island and rock off this coast is covered with wood; and it only requires that the intervening channels and fiords should dry up, and become overspread with green turf, for the country to wear at once an inland aspect, with open glades and plains surrounded by well-wooded heights.'

While rowing to examine a marked rock forty miles to the north-east of Upsal, the boatmen pointed out rocks, from one to two feet above the water, which, when boys, they remembered to have been below the surface; and a channel then nearly dry, as one through which heavily-laden boats once passed. So accustomed are they to the natural evidences of the rise, that they detect them without reference to the artificial marks, but attribute the change rather to subsidence of the sea than to elevation of the land. At Löggrund, a mark cut in a rock in 1731 was found to be nearly three feet above the present water-level. In the sixteenth century, the port of Gothenburg was twenty miles higher up the fiord on which it is built than the place where it now stands, and, according to appearances, the waters are still retreating. At Gefle, Mr Lyell states, preparations were being made to remove the harbour nearer to the sea, in consequence of the increasing shallowness of the water. At some parts of the coast both of Sweden and Finland, reports are current among the villagers of wrecks and anchors dug up at places far in the interior; and the grass crops of meadows near the sea are said to be insensibly increasing with the gradual elevation of the land. Mr Lyell travelled across Sweden from the east to the west coast, on the summit-level, and found everywhere the same appearances as on the coast. The whole country affords incontestable evidence of upheaval, but varying in different districts, being greatest towards the north, where the rise has been from six hundred to seven hundred feet, near Christiania four hundred feet, and at Uddevalla two hundred feet. The elevation, however, has been neither uniform nor continuous; what is now rising was once sinking, interrupted by long intervals of rest. Near Uddevalla, on the western coast, on removing a shelly stratum from a mass of gneiss more than one hundred feet above the sea-level, barnacles were found clinging so firmly to the surface, that portions of the newly-exposed rock came away on detaching them. Other zoophytes were also met with in considerable numbers, of the same peculiar dwarfish structure as those at present existing in the Gulf of Bothnia. The finding of similar shells at places seventy miles from the sea in the interior of the country, divests the instance here referred to of anything like an accidental character; and proves most satisfactorily that this portion of the continent has lain for a long period below the sea, while accumulations have formed above it. Perhaps the most interesting fact noticed by Mr Lyell, is the discovery of a wooden fishing-hut, at a depth of sixty-four feet beneath the surface of the soil, during the excavations for a canal to unite Lake Maeler with an inlet of the Baltic. The structure was about eight feet square; the walls crumbled away on exposure to the air, but the floor-timbers remained sound. There was a rude stone fireplace in the centre, with fragments of half-burnt wood, and outside, a heap of wood piled up for fuel: not a particle of iron appeared to have been used in the construction of this singular building. It

was compactly buried in fine sand, on which coarse gravel and large boulders in wavy strata were superimposed. It has been shown that the submergence, if caused by a sudden inundation, would have left the boulders, as the heaviest portion of the materials, at the bottom, instead of where they are now found, at the surface—a position in which they have been deposited by floating ice. And we learn from this remarkable fact, that since the building of fishing-huts in Sweden, the land where the canal is dug has sunk during a period long enough for the deposition of strata sixty-four feet in thickness by the sea, and has subsequently been raised to its present elevation.

Observations on this interesting phenomenon have been made in Sweden for about a century and a half, and we see no reason to doubt their correctness. They are still carried on under the direction of Berzelius and other members of the Royal Academy of Stockholm, with a view to determine the direction of the upheaval. As yet, the evidence is in favour of an oscillation or see-saw motion from south to north. In 1749, Linnaeus measured the distance of a large stone from the water, at Trelleborg, on the coast of Scania, the southern extremity of Sweden; it then lay one hundred feet farther from the sea than when measured in 1836—eighty-seven years later. In the seaports of this part of the country, the streets are in many instances below the level of the water—a situation in which they were not likely to have been built—and artificial mounds have been made to prevent the encroachments of the waves. It would thus appear that while the north is rising, the south is sinking; the proportion of dry land increases in the former, and diminishes in the latter. The changes to be brought about by such, as yet, mysterious movements, it is impossible to foretell. A similar phenomenon has been observed on the west coast of Greenland, where a tract six hundred miles in length is slowly subsiding. Low islands and buildings gradually disappear; and the native Greenlanders, it is said, has been taught by experience to desist from building his dwelling on the verge of the ocean.

The area of upheaval comprised in Sweden and the adjacent countries is of great extent, and may be much larger than as yet appears by the observations. According to the present data, it extends from Gothenburg to Torneo, and as far as the North Cape, but increasing towards the north, where, being covered by the ocean, its detection becomes difficult, if not altogether impossible. In length it embraces one thousand miles, and probably half that distance in breadth; and should the elevation still continue at the same rate, the upper portion of the Gulf of Bothnia, and a large extent of the sea on the west of Sweden, between Uddevalla and Gothenburg, will become converted into dry land. According to Humboldt, the bottom of the sea, now forty-five fathoms below the surface, would begin to emerge at the end of twelve thousand years.

Various hypotheses have been put forward to account for the phenomenon described in the present paper. Some writers refer all disturbances in the crust of the earth to the action of an immense central fire; others, on the contrary, attribute them to chemical agencies—decomposition of water, and magnetism. We need not call in the aid of so tremendous a power as that to be derived from an interior fire, only a few hundred miles less in diameter than the globe, to effect that which daily experience teaches us may be effected by a power similar to that exerted by the hydrostatic press; and it is well known that the passage of voltaic currents generates heat to a degree sufficient to account for volcanic and other convulsions. Experiments have been made in America as to the expansion of rocks by heat, from which, according to Mr Lyell, 'a mass of sandstone, a mile in thickness, which should have its temperature raised 200 degrees Fahrenheit, would lift a superimposed layer of rock to the height of ten feet above its former level. But suppose a part of the earth's crust, one hundred miles in thickness, and equally expandable, to

have its temperature raised 600 or 800 degrees, this might produce an elevation of between two and three thousand feet. The cooling of the same mass might afterwards cause the overlying rocks to sink down again, and resume their original position. All the facts hitherto adduced tend to show that no geological period has been one of continued repose. In whatever quarter of the world we look, the same indications speak to us of the mighty changes which have been and are still in action in most intelligible language. 'It seems to be rendered probable,' writes Mr Lyell, 'that the constant repair of the land, and the subserviency of our planet to the support of terrestrial as well as aquatic species, are secured by the elevating and depressing power of causes acting in the interior of the earth; which, although so often the source of death and terror to the inhabitants of the globe—visiting in succession every zone, and filling the earth with monuments of ruin and disorder—are nevertheless the agents of a conservative principle above all others essential to the stability of the system.'

'LIKE IS AN ILL MARK.'

THIS is a Scotch proverb, which the lawyer would do well to keep in mind in his investigations of evidence, and the man of science in his endeavours to interpret nature. To be misled by resemblances, is one of the most common forms of error. A remarkable example has lately come under public attention in the northern section of the island.

The Scotch Presbyterians use a version of the Psalms dating from the Civil War, rugged and literal, though not without some merit. About seventy years ago, the refined taste of the Robertsons and Blairs prompted an addition to the national psalmody, in the form of hymns and translations of scripture; and ultimately the church adopted a group of about sixty such spiritual songs, which have ever since been generally used in Presbyterian places of worship. Of the *Paraphrases*, as these compositions are popularly called, many are possessed of considerable merit, a few being the production of John Logan, whose works are generally admitted into collections of the British poets; while others are the work of two private clergymen, Morrison and Cameron, who might have better ranked in the same list than not a few of their contemporaries who do.

About two months ago, a manuscript volume was brought to light in Edinburgh, containing this cluster of new psalmody, at an early stage in its preparation, with emendations in three different hands of writing, giving a glimpse of the process through which the poems went before they appeared in their present state. One of the hands was neat and feminine; the second, a rough but formal hand; the third—to quote a newspaper notice—'masculine, massy, mysterious: such a hand as at once arrests the eye of the autographologist, and which catches even the uninitiated, like some strongly-marked countenance, which, once seen, is never forgotten.'

The various literary gentlemen who saw the volume, did not for a moment hesitate to express their belief that this last hand was that of Robert Burns. The only point it seemed to them necessary to be anxious about was—the date. The *Paraphrases* having been finally arranged in 1781, could Burns have had a share in them? He might, for he was then twenty-two years of age—an obscure flax-dresser, indeed, at Irvine, but believed to have been even then known amongst the provincial clergy, some one of whom might have had an opportunity of consulting him on this subject. Then the nature of the emendations in the 'massy, mysterious hand,' was such as to argue the able journalist who first called attention to the subject.

'In the amendments on the *Paraphrases*, we find unmistakable marks of the "deep mouth." At how slight an expense of words, for instance, is the following

stanza (the 2d verse of the 50th paraphrase) redeemed from feebleness and commonplace, and rendered instinct with elegance and vigour! We find from the manuscript that it had originally stood thus:—

"Those bodies then, corrupted now,
Shall uncorrupted rise;
Mortal they fell, but rise to live
Immortal in the skies."

The magician touches it, and it takes straightway the exquisite form in which we now find it vested in the Assembly's version—

"Those bodies that corrupted fell,
Shall uncorrupted rise;
And mortal forms shall spring to life
Immortal in the skies."

In some instances we see a broken figure disentangled from the debris in which it had lain, and then repaired and set up in its integrity, as if by a breath. Thus, the 26th paraphrase had begun—

"Ho! ye that thirst, approach the spring
Of ever-flowing bliss."

The poet breathes upon it, and it becomes—

"Ho! ye that thirst, approach the spring
Where living waters flow."

In other cases the smallest sprinkling of words works a mighty change. Thus, the 4th and 5th verses of the 6th paraphrase had originally run as follows:—

"Though in his garden to the sun
His boughs with verdure smile;
Though deeply fixed, his spreading roots
Unshaken stand a while;
Yet when from Heaven his sentence flies,
He's hurried from his place."

As re-written in the hand of Burns, and in part adopted by the committee, the passage runs thus:—

"Fair in the garden to the sun
His boughs with blossoms smile,
And, deeply fixed, his spreading roots
Unshaken stand a while;
But forth the sentence flies from Heaven,
And sweeps him from his place."

In the second line here, the original words, "boughs with verdure smile," must have been preferred by the committee to the more euphonous "boughs with blossoms smile" of the poet; and in the concluding line, we find a "that" substituted for the "and." The reader will detect similar re-iterations, which are hardly improvements, in the following stanzas of the 48th paraphrase. We first give them in the original of the manuscript volume:—

"Now let our souls ascend above
The fears of guilt and wo;
God is for us our friend declared,
Who then can be our foe?
He who his Son, his only Son,
For us gave up to die,
Will He withhold a lesser gift,
Or what is good deny?
Behold all blessings sealed in this
The highest pledge of love,
All grace and peace on earth below,
And endless life above.
Now who shall dare to charge with guilt
Whom God hath justified,
Or who is he that shall condemn,
Since Christ the Saviour died?
He died, but he is risen again,
Triumphant from the grave,
And pleads for us at God's right hand,
Omnipotent to save.
Then who can e'er divide us more
From Christ and from his love?

The passage in the rendering of Burns runs as follows:—

"The Lord Almighty is our friend,
And who can prove a foe?
He who his Son, his only Son,
Gave for mankind to die,
Will He a lesser gift withhold,
Or what is good deny?"

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Behold the best, the greatest gift,
Of everlasting love;
Behold the pledge of peace below,
And perfect bliss above.
Where is the Judge that can condemn,
Since God hath justified?
Who shall presume to charge with guilt
For whom the Saviour died?
The Saviour died, but rose again,
Triumphant from the grave,
And pleads our cause within the veil,
Omnipotent to save.
Then who can e'er divide us more
From Jesus and his love?

After all, the handwriting formed the only solid ground on which Burns could be believed to have intermeddled with the making of hymns; for though he published translations of one or two of the psalms, and entered, in his *Cotter's Saturday Night*, into the poetical aspect of religious life in the vale of poverty, it did not appear as if he were the kind of man likely to have assisted the General Assembly of the Scotch Church in any of its purposes. A holograph so peculiar that no one could say he had ever seen anything like it, seemed evidence sufficient, and so the matter rested for a time, as if a curious new chapter had been satisfactorily added to the life of the marvellous bard of Coila.

It at length appeared that the conclusion was premature. Several gentlemen, possessing original letters of Logan the poet, looked them up to examine the handwriting. To the surprise of those who had first pronounced for Burns, the holograph of Logan proved to be nearly the same! There was a slight difference in point of force or boldness between the writing of the emendator and the common hand of Burns—the former being the weaker—and a few of the characters, particularly the capital letters, were invariably formed differently. Now the handwriting in the volume was more near to the degree of strength or massiveness presented in Logan's writings than to that of Burns's. The special peculiarities, too, were all identical with those in Logan's writings, and different from those of Burns's. It therefore became manifest that Logan, who avowedly wrote several of the Paraphrases, had also been employed in amending them. Burns, consequently, for anything that appeared, had had nothing to do with them.

We have thought it not amiss thus to chronicle the mistake; because, next to seeing how truth may be attained, it is well to see how error may be fallen into, and by what cautions it may be avoided. Every day we are adopting misapprehensions from real or fancied resemblances. Let the old Scotch proverb be kept in view—*Like is an ill mark*.

HOPPING IN KENT.

THE long bright summer of this year, 1846—a summer which many old people declare to have been unequalled in warmth and beauty by any their memories can recall—is now ended, and we have reached the equinox once more. I am just now making holiday in a large old Kentish farmhouse, which 'beats all creation' in a peculiar style of old-world beauty. It is an ancient manor-house—part of it is in ruins, uninhabitable but by bats, owls, and ghosts. The inhabited parts of the house are of three different periods of building: outside, you admire the tall, various-fashioned chimneys, the pointed gables, the ivy-covered walls and old casements, and the picturesque no-design in the whole gray, time-hallowed edifice; and inside, you admire the steps up, and the steps down, into sundry rooms; the Gothic arched bedroom doorways; the oak staircase and doors; the slanting old floors; the huge chimneys; the queer closets; and, above all, the great kitchen fireplace, with a chimney as big as a small room, where you can sit, six or eight together, within the ingle, and push the great logs of wood about with your feet, while you chat or watch the thick wreaths of smoke as they glide up the chimney, and circle round hams and bacon,

and tongues, remains of the defunct denizens of the farm-yard.

Dear old L.—Court! (for it retains its ancient aristocratic designation) each year that I visit you, your beauty seems to grow dearer to me. This sweet place, with its hamlet or village of the same name, lies in a quiet, open valley, unknown to the general traveller through the country. It is a great way off a high road; and excepting the few cottages in the village, and the small house of the clergyman, there is no building near, except indeed the church, which stands apparently in the garden, but which is really parted from it by a low wall. As I look up from my paper now, the quaint old garden—in this part about twenty yards wide—is all that separates the room in which I sit from the church-yard wall; and immediately on the other side of that rises the old church-tower, covered with ivy, which is now in full blossom.

I almost hope that you are, like myself, a dweller in the land of bricks and chimney-pots—so will you relish the rustic festival the better. But I daresay you are not so much of a Cockney as I was when I first visited L.—some seven years ago. I was then too ignorant of the beauties of nature to enjoy them properly: I hardly knew a dandelion from a dahlia; and I certainly did not know *hops* when I saw them. Since then, my love of nature has increased with my knowledge of her; and this, my first visit to L.—during the hopping season, has given me great pleasure; and I will tell you all I have learned about 'hopping,' if you are disposed to listen.

It was between nine and ten o'clock at night, and quite dark, when I arrived here, about a fortnight ago. As we drove along through the narrow green lanes, I observed, here and there, in fields, or on a sheltered spot near the road, bright fires blazing, round which stood or sat groups of men, women, and children, eating, or drinking, or idly resting. Near the fires were to be seen the oddest-looking little huts—just like gigantic dog-kennels made of new straw. I had never seen a gipsy encampment like this; besides, the people, though wild and ragged enough in most cases for gipsies, had not, as far as I could judge by the fire-light, in our quick passage by them, any of the physical peculiarities of the Egyptian tribe. I inquired who these people were, and was informed that they were 'hoppers.' 'Stranger hoppers—from London chiefly.' On further inquiry, I learned that in plentiful hop seasons, like the present, the hop-growers are glad of more assistance than they can obtain in their own neighbourhood, for picking the hops; that poor persons (many from London) come down into the hop-growing country, with their children, in search of employment in the hop-gardens. Their employers generally have a few trusses of straw made up into little huts for them to sleep in during the week or two that they remain. At night they light fires of broken hop poles, and warm themselves while their supper is cooking. They pass the night in these straw huts, and the whole day, from six in the morning till six in the evening, in the hop-gardens. When the weather is as mild and beautiful as it has been during the last three weeks, there can be no hardship in this *al fresco* life; though, in some severe seasons, when the hops are not fit to pick until later in the year, and when the rains are abundant, the poor hoppers have not a very comfortable existence. This year, however, they have in most cases, I should think, derived great benefit from the change from the narrow alleys and courts of London, to the pure air and rural toil in the hop-gardens. It was quite delightful to see how a week or two's rustication coloured the cheeks, and brightened the eyes, of the puny things which Dickens calls 'town-made children.' And I daresay they will remember through the dreary winter, in Shoreditch, the wonders of the country which they saw while they were 'out hopping in Kent.' One sweet little girl, who told us that 'mother kept a fruit-stall opposite the Catholic chapel in Moorfield, and that they

lived in an attic in Half-Moon Street, Bishopgate, seemed to look forward with great pleasure to the time next year when, 'please God she lived,' she 'should come again to pick hops at L—.'

May I venture now to tell how we pick hops at L—, and indeed wherever they grow in England; and, as travelled folks tell me, in Belgium too? Well, then, you must imagine before you a large hop-garden—say of twenty acres—full of regular rows of very tall poles, all encircled to the summit with rich graceful wreaths of hops. The plants, which belong to the Nettle order, resemble in general appearance a vine; but, instead of grapes, are furnished with loose drooping panicles, and bunches of imbricated scales, containing small seed-vessels. The latter, which are the flowers, and likewise fruit, as it may be called, of the female, constitute the hops, and are first of a green or greenish-white colour, then yellow when ripe, darkening into brown. Parties of pickers, consisting of men, women, and children, are stationed in different parts of the garden, each with a large bin before them; which bin is made of a poke or hop-sack, opened on one side, and fastened roughly over a framework of broken hop-poles. Into this bin the busy fingers of the group let fall the fragrant hops, as they strip them from the long wreaths, cut or torn off the poles. Some of the men are called pole-pullers, and it is their business to pull up the poles from the ground, and to supply the different sets of pickers with fresh poles as fast as they want them. This is the hardest work in the garden, next to carrying away the well-filled sacks when the day's work is done. Twice a day—generally about the pickers' dinner-time, and again when they have finished for the day—a person employed by the proprietor, or perhaps the proprietor himself, goes to each set of pickers and measures their quantity of picked hops. This is done in a bushel-basket: there is a black line drawn inside this basket, at the height of half a bushel; and it is the custom, in measuring hops, to reckon as a whole bushel what remains in the bin at last, if it reach above this black line in the basket—namely, if it exceed half a bushel, this bushel, by sufferance, is called a 'catch.' It is amusing to see the excitement which prevails at the close of the measuring, in expectation that 'there will be a catch.' For my own part, I felt much better pleased when we had 'a catch,' than when we picked an exact number of bushels in our bin: there was all the satisfaction of getting the best in a bargain, which honest folks, let them say what they may to the contrary, cannot help enjoying. The measurers are often very expert, and empty in a few minutes the bin which it has taken a whole family as many hours to fill. As they are measured out, they are poured into a poke; when the poke is full, it is tied up, and carried off to the 'oast-house.' Here fires are kept up night and day, while the hops are being picked, to dry them as fast as they come in. Sulphur is put into the furnaces, that its fumes may improve the colour of the hops, which should be of a pale brownish-yellow hue. When they are thoroughly dried, the hops are heaped up on the floor of a large upper chamber; and here is carried on a process which is most ridiculous to the looker-on. This is treading the hops into the sacks, so as to press them into as small a compass as possible, each sack being made to hold a certain weight. The way it is done is thus:—There are circular holes cut through the floor of this chamber into the empty space below it; a poke is fastened by the mouth round each of these holes, so that it hangs down loosely below. This being strongly adjusted, a man begins to fill the poke with the dried hops, which lie around on the floor. Having thrown in a certain quantity, he springs into the poke himself, and forthwith begins to jump round and round in the sack, treading down the hops. To see the grave faces of the people who perform this ludicrous work, greatly enhances its effect. Their heads keep bobbing up and down like a Jack-in-the-box; and every now and then they stretch up a hand, and seizing the handle of

a huge rake, which they keep within reach, they bring down a fresh mass of hops on their heads, and tread it down under their feet. By continuing this absurd dance in the poke, they rise gradually out of it; but the same jumping goes on until the sack is full, and the treader's whole figure is seen jumping on a level with the floor, going round and round, in an uncouth dance, with all the solemnity of a spinning dervish. No description can do justice to the drollery of this part of the business of preparing hops for the market. When the poke is well filled, the indefatigable jumper ceases his jumping, the mouth of the sack is loosened from the floor of the oast-house, fastened up securely, and lowered by some machine to the ground beneath, where it stands ready for transportation to market.

The rate of payment to the pickers in the hop-garden varies with the state of the season. This season is a fruitful one; and in a good garden the hops are *tallied*, as it is called, at *eight or nine*; that is to say, eight or nine bushels are picked for a shilling. In all seasons, the best pickers can earn about two shillings a-day. Women are in general the best pickers. The hoppers are paid either every night, or at the end of hopping. It is customary for the hoppers to contribute a trifle each, to buy the pole-pullers a favour, as it is called. This is generally some ribbons, or a silk handkerchief, with which they parade about at the hopping-supper and subsequent dance, which generally takes place on the evening of the last day's hopping, at the nearest ale-house.

The hop-garden itself is a very pretty sight when all the people are at work, or when they are taking their dinners on the ground. The young children play, and laugh, and talk in the intervals of picking, and the village youths and maidens carry on desperate flirtations, just as their betters do at a *fête champêtre*. Many a Kentish marriage has been made up in a hop-garden, just because the parties picked at the same bin. If we were to inspect too narrowly all that goes on in this apparently gay and happy scene, we might probably find a due mixture of disagreeables. There are quarrels in a hop-garden; and here, as elsewhere, we may find envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness; but this year things are so flourishing, that the hoppers appear almost as envious as the Arcadian shepherds in the Golden Age. I cannot help regretting that hopping is well-nigh over, and look on the bare poles with the respect due to the supporters of so much beauty. Of all nature's wreaths—briony, travellers' joy, and wild convolvulus not excepted—the hop is incomparably the most beautiful.

WANTS AND WISHES.

MYSELF AND I.

ADAM SMITH, in his 'Theory of Moral Sentiments,' has some striking and beautiful thoughts respecting the interior judgment of the mind on its own impulses and acts; which judgment he supposes to be given forth by an ideal personage, whom he calls 'the man within the breast'—a sort of supreme and infallible lawgiver, from whose decisions there lies no appeal. There are few thoughtful persons but must be sensible at times of this sort of *duality* within them; and to such observers of themselves, and perhaps to others, the following illustration of Adam Smith's theory may not be unacceptable.

Myself. I feel very restless; very unsettled and unhappy; and yet I don't know what I want.

I. Do you know what you *wish* for?

M. Oh yes; I wish for many more things than I have any chance of obtaining.

I. Probably, then, it is this hopeless state of *wishing* that causes the restlessness and disturbance of which you complain? Suppose that, for the better understanding of your mental disease, and the remedial treatment it requires, you endeavour to distinguish between your *wants* and *wishes*; and treating them as you would your wardrobe, if you were going a journey, take with you

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nothing but what you absolutely want. Your cares and incumbrances will surely, in that case, be considerably lighter?

M. Very well. To begin with my wants. I want to be happy, and so to enjoy the boon of existence as to feel it a blessed thing to exist. This, you will allow, is indispensable?

I. Quite so. This want must travel with you for ever: let us, then, inquire how it is to be satisfied. And first, What do you conceive to constitute happiness?

M. I think I should be happy if I had sufficient money to enjoy myself, and live in the way I should like.

I. That is to say, you wish you had more money, that you might take as much pleasure as you like? Well, this is clearly no want. I think you may do without this. It is like a full-trimmed holiday dress, that takes up a deal of room in a trunk, to the exclusion of much more useful articles. We may throw that aside. What comes next?

M. I want to be distinguished and admired, and not to pass in a crowd as a mere nobody.

I. This seems to be of the order of wishes, not wants. I believe we may send it after the other, as useless. Come, keep to the indispensable; and consider, before you speak, whether it is a want or a wish that you are about to specify.

M. Why, really, when I come to analyse the matter, my wants appear to be so few, that when I have stated in general terms that I want to be happy, I seem to have comprised them all. However, I think we must agree that wants and wishes are so near akin to each other in the search after happiness, that it is scarcely possible to separate them.

I. Indeed I don't agree to this. On the contrary, I believe it is the habit of mixing and identifying our wants and wishes that causes so much confusion, mistake, and misery, to thousands of human beings.

M. At all events, you will allow that every living man and woman both wants and wishes to be happy?

I. The want is very clear, and quite unmistakable in its nature; but the wish is usually erroneous; that is to say, it does not perceive rightly its object, or the means of obtaining it. For instance: a man wants to be happy; this want is just as much a law of his nature as the want of food; and he wishes to satisfy it, just as when he is hungry he wishes to eat. But then the wise and necessary separation is to be made between the nature of the want and the wish, and the eye of the mind kept upon the watch, to preserve the requisite distinction, that they may not run into one, and thus be mistaken for the same thing. A man wants to satisfy his hunger with food, and he wishes to have it of the most delicious and luxurious kind; but this, surely, is not indispensable. At all events, if he makes it so, he creates a want that simple honest nature never gave him; and, you may rely upon it, she will revenge this infringement of her rules by appearing before him, when he least expects it, in some form of bodily suffering, by which, 'without speech or language,' she will intelligently enough indicate to him that she is not to be offended with impunity. He wants to eat—let him eat, then; but he wants also to be in health. Does he want this, or only wish it? He wants it; for a state of health is indispensable to the enjoyment of his existence, and to the fulfilment of those duties which are annexed to the condition of human beings. Let him be careful, therefore, so to regulate and subdue his wishes for the pleasures of the table, that they may be the servants, not the masters, of his wants. In like manner, a man wants to be happy.

M. (With an ejaculation between a groan and a sigh.) And oh the quantity of pretty things this world has to give to make him so! all of which are embodied in their representative—money. Who that wishes to be happy, can ever cease to wish for the possession of money?

I. Might you not as well say, 'Who that is hungry, can ever cease to wish for venison and turtle soup?' A hungry man that is under the dominion of nature—that is to say, who has never spoiled her simplicity of desire by the stimulus of luxurious feeding—will enjoy, and be refreshed, by the plainest food; and, in fact, the plainer it is, the better he will like it, because it will harmonise with the humility of nature, which never asks for more than she wants.

M. How comes it, then, that in seeming to follow the dictates of nature, or, in other words, in pursuing their natural inclination to enjoy themselves, so many persons make shipwreck of everything?

I. Just because they mistake the wishes of the will for the wants of nature. Nature has her wants; but she has also a spiritual rule to regulate and govern these wants: a rule which goes by different names—as reason, conscience, the moral sense, &c. (but which, when analysed, mean one and the same thing). As she and her rule are observed and obeyed, they gradually subjugate the lawless wishes of the will to their proper governors. But when the case is reversed, and the modesty of nature, and the dignity of reason, have their dominion usurped by those wild impulses of the will which are generally caressed and nourished under the gentle name of wishes—no wonder that shipwreck is made of everything.

M. It would seem to be, then, that I may want as much as I like, but wish for nothing.

I. Horace says, according to Pope's version of him,

'Not to desire, is all the art I know
To make men happy, and to keep them so.'

And of this you may rest well assured, that every wish which is not founded upon a want, is a wish which it is quite essential to your happiness to resist and conquer; and for this reason, that it is in vain for you to attempt the satisfaction of it—inasmuch as it proceeds from the all-devouring voracity of the will, 'which grows by what it feeds on,' and thus becomes insatiable. Did you never hear a mother or a nurse say to a fractious, spoiled child, 'You don't know what you would have?' And did you never observe what sort of men and women spoiled children make?

M. A torment, no doubt, they are to themselves and everybody about them.

I. Yet they did not grow into this state of torment because their wants, but because their wishes, were gratified.

M. But if we are to gratify only our actual wants, I do not see what pleasure or amusements we are to be allowed; for it is very easy to make out that we do not want any recreation.

I. No, it would not be easy to make that out. Cheerful recreation is as much wanted for the mind as food for the body; but, as well as the food, it should be of a wholesome, refreshing kind. And here, how sweet and simple are the dictates and impulses of nature! Look at the first dawning of intelligence in an infant, in its attempts at what is commonly called 'taking notice.' The smile of wonder at the dangling of a string, or the mystery of its own little delicate fingers, as the pretty hand is held up and gazed upon; the quiet contentment (if the disordered will be but properly guided and governed by those who have the care of it) with which, as it grows in capability, it amuses itself, by finding its natural, proper, and appointed enjoyment in the very bias of being, and the calm, simple pleasures that belong to a state of being—all this sufficiently indicates that, until stimulated by artificial excitements, and bewildered by their multiplicity, the creature has no difficulty in fulfilling the Creator's will, that it should be happy.

M. Are there never any invasions upon this tranquil state of enjoyment? Does not being exhibit a reversed side of the picture?

I. Doubtless it does; just as inanimate nature presents us with storms and volcances, as well as calm and

sunny skies, and smiling landscapes. The volcanic will of the child—more or less impetuous, according to the physical organisation of the subject—will of course manifest its impulses; and upon the proper treatment of these exhibitions of evil, will the future happiness of the individual mainly depend. Let nature, and nature's interior rule, be minded and helped, and the creature constantly be taught to distinguish its *wishes* from its indispensable *wants*, and to keep the former in subjection to the latter, and in due time but little will be wished for beyond what is wanted; for at the last, it is commonly perceived by all, even by the most mistaken in their previous course, that those things which we could not properly do without, were the only things which it concerned us to wish for the possession of. We cannot do without happiness: let us be careful, therefore, to prize and seek for those things that make happiness. They branch out into many ramifications, but may be traced in their origin to two roots—namely, that which regards the body, and that which regards the mind. Health in respect to the former, and peace in respect to the latter, are the fruits we hope to gather under the name of happiness. Temperance is wanted to promote health—virtue is wanted to promote peace. The one it is not always within our power to attain or preserve; and when this is the case, the equality of the dealings of Providence with its creatures never fails to grant some preponderating benefit elsewhere in the lot. But to be virtuous is within the compass of our capabilities; for it is the thing *wanted*, and absolutely indispensable to happiness. A man may have plenty of money, and be able to enjoy a certain degree of sensual gratification, and he may also, in a very high degree, realise your wish of possessing such claims to distinction and admiration as shall insure him the applause and favour of the world; but unless he meets with the secret, calm approval of 'the still small voice' in his own conscience, he has not understood, or attempted to satisfy, the greatest of his wants, and must be, in point of fact and reality, a needy and most unhappy person. He has indulged his wishes at the expense of his necessities. It was not necessary for him to enjoy vain and sensual pleasures: it *was* necessary for him to be happy. It was not essential to happiness that he should be distinguished and admired for his talents: it was so that he should be respected and beloved; and he could not be either without being honest, truthful, kind, simple-hearted—in a word, a man of principle. The thief who goes to transportation, and the murderer who goes to the gallows; the intoxicated vagabond who is put into the station-house to grow sober, and, when sobered, is handed up to the mansion-house to hear and see his degradation proclaimed to the world; the defrauder, who stands there also, a living testimony of the fatal consequences of setting up his wishes as his guides and masters—what, think you, is the language of all their secret cogitations in those painful moments of sure and certain retribution? Do not the *want* and the *wish* meet then in one and the same thing? Are not the deep unuttered words of the heart and conscience, 'Oh how I wish that I had not done this thing!' a desire which, when interpreted into its legitimate meaning, implies, 'Oh that I had been contented to mind and gratify only my *wants*, and had not thus become the tool and fool of my ignorant wishes!'

The sum and substance of the whole of the matter is this, that happiness consists in peace of mind; and that peace of mind is only to be found in a state of equilibrium—a *nicely-poised* interior. All sorts of wishing have a tendency to destroy this valuable condition, because every wish has somewhat of the nature of the magnet in it; and unless balanced by a real legitimate *want*, will be sure to draw the mind from its centre. You wish for money; you wish to be distinguished; but how much of this wishing is balanced by a want? Just as much as this—you want money enough for your support, and for your necessary and lawful recrea-

tions; you want to be known and distinguished by those with whom you are connected, and with whom, in the circumstances of life, you may be called upon to deal as an honest person; as one whose word is his bond, and who has never to be searched for in holes and corners where the light of truth never enters. These are plain, lawful, intelligible wants, to which the most fervent and active wishes may be safely linked. But overstep these limits, and launch your bark upon the wide, and fathomless, and troubled ocean of your will—to which, at *every* period of life, the nurse's answer to the fractious child, 'You know not what you would have,' is most appropriate—and vainly will you ever try again to anchor your spirit in any safe harbour of rest.

THE CHINESE MIRAGE.

THE word mirage is usually applied to natural scenery, and expresses that interesting effect of atmospherical refraction which sometimes covers a plain with a lake, in whose bosom are seen the reflection of trees and houses, and sometimes piles up towers and domes in the midst of a wilderness. Mired by the illusion, the weary and thirsty traveller of the desert pants in vain after the fairy waters, or seeks the shelter of those palace walls: the lake retreats as he approaches—the pinnacles sink before his eyes, and the buildings crumble and disappear.

In some countries a *moral* mirage is presented, quite as strange to the imagination, and perplexing to the judgment; and of such countries China may perhaps be cited as the most striking. Objects there are not only different to different observers—they are sometimes absolutely inverted; and what is still more extraordinary, some persons assure us that they have actually drunk of the waters, and leant against the walls, which others know, of their own personal knowledge, to be as unsubstantial as those of the Fata Morgana. The last reporter is Mr Meadows,* who founds his claims to our trust upon his knowledge of the language; and this, assuredly, is a great advantage, although, in our opinion, he plumes himself a little too much upon it. Shut up in an office, translating papers, and going through the other details of consular business, a mere knowledge of the language could hardly enable him, one would think, to decide masterfully upon the conflicting accounts we have received of a population of between three and four hundred millions. Still, we should not have thought it necessary to say anything about the natural exaggeration he has fallen into on the subject, were it not for a mistake into which it has led him, that may be worth pointing out, inasmuch as it is a very common one with travellers. He conceives 'that no man is entitled to write upon a foreign people unless he possess a practical knowledge of their language. Without this knowledge, it is next to impossible that he should write anything original about them. He may collect information from those that do know the language, and he may adopt their opinions, but he cannot form them for himself; or if he does risk it, they can scarcely have other foundation than his own imagination.'

Mr Meadows, then, supposes that each traveller who understands the language must entirely supersede his predecessors; for almost all travellers differ from each other, and it is impossible they can all be right. As for those laborious persons who compare such conflicting testimony at home, and form their opinions from the sifted evidence, they are not worth attending to, because they do not understand the language! But travellers, whatever Mr Meadows may think, are mere collectors of materials for historians and compilers; and

* Desultory Notes on the Government and People of China, and on the Chinese Language; illustrated with a Sketch of the Province of Kwang-Tung, showing its Division into Departments and Districts. By Thomas Taylor Meadows, Interpreter to Her Britannic Majesty's Consulate at Canton. London: Allen. 1847.

he, like the rest of his brethren, must submit his lucubrations to the critics, who will conceive that reading and reflection, undisturbed by personal feelings, entitle them to form an opinion.

Among the interesting subjects discussed in the volume before us, is that of population. 'It would seem,' says the author, 'that people now, when they hear of a country containing 360,000,000 of inhabitants—the population generally attributed to China—fancy, somehow, that this immense collection of human beings is crammed into a territory not greater than that of France or Austria, and that, consequently, the density of the population must be quite excessive. But the truth is, that China proper, containing, as is well known, about 1,300,000 square miles, would have, with its 360,000,000 of inhabitants, only 277 souls to the square mile, and thus be somewhat less densely populated than England; which latter country has, according to the census of 1841, about 297 souls to the square mile. Now, over all China husbandry is carried to considerable perfection; over a great part of it two crops of rice may be had annually; the body of its people are industrious and economical; but at the same time all, even those who can barely afford to feed a wife, marry young, all being exceedingly anxious to have children. Such being the case, why should its population remain stationary at a less degree of density than that of England?' The reason he has himself given—that the land is fully cultivated. The Chinese appear to extract as much subsistence from the soil as their state of knowledge renders practicable; and they are not only 'industrious and economical,' but parsimonious and omnivorous in the widest meaning of the word. The population remains stationary within the country, simply because the table is full; but an excess is born, and is drifted away every year in emigration, in defiance of law and ancient custom. In comparing China with England, as regards this subject, Mr Meadows forgets that the latter country is the workshop of the world, and that men are there in great demand; whereas in the former, which has no foreign trade worth talking of, all must be supported by the productions of the soil. If the population of England received as few supplies from abroad as that of China, the difference in numbers would very soon be quite the other way.

The 'cause of the long duration of the Chinese empire' is another mirage of our author. It 'is solely and altogether owing,' says he, 'to the operation of a principle, which the policy of every successive dynasty has practically maintained in a greater or less degree; namely, that good government consists in the advancement of men of talent and merit only to the rank and power conferred by official posts.

'The existence of a system of examinations, based on this principle, is well known to every educated European; and it is literally impossible to conceive that the various writers on China, from the Jesuit missionaries who lived upwards of one hundred and fifty years ago, to the sinologues of the present day, can have failed to perceive the effects of this institution—effects so obvious, and so distinctly pointed out by Chinese writers, as to require no penetration to discover them. Yet, strange to say, all those whose works I have been enabled to peruse, seem to attribute the long duration and stability of the Chinese empire chiefly to the influence of the doctrine of filial piety, as inculcated by the Chinese sages. Now this doctrine, I maintain, does nothing as a *fundamental* cause to uphold the unity and stability of the Chinese empire; its influence, great though it undoubtedly be, could not of itself resist the existing causes of dismemberment for a single generation; and even for that influence—for all that is peculiar in the practical hold it possesses on the minds of the Chinese people—it is indebted to the principle referred to above as the sole cause of the long duration of the empire.'

His foundation for this opinion is partly 'a conversation' between two of the pattern emperors, who, we

beg leave to inform him, flourished at the epoch of the Mosaic deluge! It also rests upon a speech addressed to Ching-tang, not very far from two thousand years before the Christian era, commending him for bestowing posts only upon the virtuous; the said Ching-tang, as we read in history, being accustomed to amuse himself with making people walk over a narrow bar of iron, slippery with grease, and spanning an immense fire. Various appeals are made to other documents of the kind—all showing an unconquerable addiction to belief in the Chinese mirage.

Of some two dozen dynasties, commencing with authentic history, there is hardly one that did not begin and end in blood and usurpation. The dynasty usually set out with something like energy; but, by degrees, succeeding princes gave themselves up both to the weakness and tyranny that distinguished the worst of the Roman emperors; till at length, when the measure was full, when the country could endure no more, a usurper seated himself, with hardly an effort, on the throne; and the people, thankful for any change, bowed their heads in abject submission as before. The very same course was run by the first Tartar dynasty; and now the second has reached that period of imbecility which shows that its end, in the natural course of things, is at hand. There is no country mentioned in history to which the doctrine of Mr Meadows is less applicable than China, although this is not the place for an examination of such a subject in the length it would demand. For the present, we would merely note, that after every political convulsion, the people returned, as of one accord, to their habitual submission; to their worship at the tombs of their ancestors; to their reverence for their parents, and respect for superiors and magistrates; and to the rendering of divine honours to the emperor for the time being, even if an illegitimate or an alien.

In other matters of less importance, Mr Meadows' contributions to our knowledge of China are extremely welcome; and the following, for instance, on the subject of fashion, is both new and curious:—'The Chinese dress—to descend to minor topics—is generally supposed to be quite unchangeable, and the Chinese tailors a kind of stereotype clothiers. Now, it is true that the Chinese (I speak of the middle and higher classes) always wear long gowns when they go out, just as we wear coats; but as every part of our coats, and our other garments, are constantly being subjected to all kinds of changes, within certain limits, so the length of the Chinese gown, the size and form of its sleeves, its colour, and the kind of flowers worked in it when of silk, &c. &c. are perpetually varying. The same is the case with the Chinese shoes and winter scull-caps: the former are, within certain limits, at one period thick, and at another thin-soled; and the latter are at one time shallow, and at another deep; while the silk knob on the top is sometimes small, at others large, &c. &c. In China, in short, we find as many fops as in Europe, who, like their brethren of the West, are so thoroughly versed in matters of dress, that they can at a glance tell you whether a man's clothes be of the latest fashion or not.'

His information on the subject of the salaries of the Chinese officers may be placed in the like category. A mandarin's legal income is derived from salary and fees, but these items have a very little proportion to each other. 'For instance, one of those, in the receipt of about £22 legal income, once complained feelingly to me about his poverty; and on my hinting that his post was, after all, not a bad one, he protested, with some earnestness, that his whole income did not exceed 7000 taels (£2335), of which he had, he said, to give a great deal away. Now this old gentleman seemed to be one of those who complain on principle, and I am inclined to estimate his net income at upwards of 7000 taels; but his is one of the best of the lower posts.' A governor-general of a province receives £60 salary, and £8333 fees; and the fees of the other mandarins

are in proportion, not to their salary, but to their rank. But the illegal fees and extortions swell the income to something very handsome indeed. 'I have found it impossible to learn, with any degree of certainty, what the real incomes of the mandarins, as increased by illegal fees and special bribes, may amount to. They vary with the harvests, which, according as they are good or bad, render it easy or difficult to collect the land-tax—a proceeding in connection with which much extortion is carried on; they vary also with the number of lawsuits, and the wealth of the litigating parties; and lastly, they vary with the characters of the mandarins and their yemuns. The legal incomes of the lower mandarins are indeed so notoriously insufficient, that they have little hesitation in speaking, even to a foreigner, of their other gains in a general way; but they have many reasons for not entering into particulars. Hence, if you do contrive to learn what the gross income of any post is on an average, it is next to impossible to gain any idea of the net income—that is, of how much is left after all the higher mandarins have had their presents, &c. Under these circumstances, it is little better than a guess, when I assume the highest mandarins to get about ten times, the lowest about fifty times, the amount of their legal incomes.'

In a brief note on 'personating criminals,' we are informed that in the east of the province of Canton, 'a substitute may be procured to confess himself guilty of a felony, and suffer certain capital punishment, for about fifty taels of silver—a sum that would exchange here for about seventeen pounds sterling; and which, valued with reference to the amount of the necessities of life it would purchase in the department mentioned, is probably not worth more than one hundred pounds sterling in England.' This fact speaks eloquently of the gulf of starvation and despair in which a portion of the population of China are plunged.

Upon the whole, although Mr Meadows somewhat overrates his opportunities, he must be reckoned useful as a contributor of materials; and we would advise no compiler to sit down to a picture of the Chinese without a careful study of his 'Desultory Notes.'

THE PRIVILEGE OF MERCY.

On a bright September day in the year 1559, there entered the town of Vendôme a young prelate, mounted on a milk-white mule, which was shod with silver, and sumptuously caparisoned with scarlet trappings. The rider wore an ample red cloak, whose purple-fringed border well-nigh concealed the back of his ambling steed. His hat was also of scarlet hue, and from its crown floated two richly-twisted cords, each of which was ornamented with twenty-one purple tufts. These one-and-twenty tufts denoted the wearer's ecclesiastical dignity as cardinal and metropolitan, and perchance as patriarch also. Consequently, the inhabitants of the town crowded around him, and on bended knees besought his blessing, which he bestowed in the most orthodox and graceful manner, from side to side, as he slowly pursued his way.

He was a cardinal legate, and was travelling from his diocese of Amiens to his bishopric of Nantes. He had, according to the custom of the times, been provided with a patriarchate, a Syrian archbishopric, and five or six bishoprics. He was preceded by a cross-bearer, and followed by a physician, an exorcist, and a hundred archers, clad in livery. They were all mounted on mules, which ambled leisurely along, and if overtaken by a storm, the whole cavalcade (archers and mules included) took refuge in the nearest church. They neither dined, supped, nor slept anywhere except in religious houses; nor was it permitted them to abide longer than twenty-six hours in any one monastery; so that whenever their prescribed term of repose had expired, let the storm be ever so fierce, or the rain ever so violent, it stormed and rained upon the cardinal and his purple tufts.

On entering Vendôme, the cardinal proceeded towards the church of the Trinity, of which he was the commendatory abbot; and reaching the square in which it stood, he found the place thronged with a motley and tumultuous assemblage of people. There were stout and ruddy citizens, clad in many-coloured doublets, with their wives dressed in the finest Amboise cloth, and their little girls bedizened à la mignonette. There were ragged scapegraces, and honest, well-patched vine-dressers, alongside of rich and well-clothed farmers. There were also smart girls, with embroidered collars and coquettish costume, mixed with farm-servants, whose unbleached aprons and coarse caps bespoke their poverty and toil. Nor must we omit certain varieties of the count, looking saucy and conceited; nor a groom of the countess, whose aspect was grave and sad (wherefore we shall hear by and by); while ever and anon there appeared at the notary's window two ancient ladies, gazing at the crowd. And truly a motley crowd it was!—a grave-digger and a juggler, lame horses and barking dogs, beggars and clowns, all gaping, as if in expectation of some earnestly-longed-for sight.

The scene lay in a square, three sides of which were skirted by Gothic houses with high-pointed roofs, whose gutters were of a curiously grotesque construction; and on the fourth side arose the stately church, with its portal adorned with delicate dentellated tracery. Near it stood a colossal tower, or rather a lofty steeple (built apart from the church), whose tall spire reached to the height of three hundred feet. On a level with the highest pinnacle, and apparently resting among the clouds, rose at a little distance behind the noble and saintly mountain of Vendôme, with its rocks, its pinnacles, its caverns, and its bushes of trailing vine; the crown of the hill being occupied by a huge and impregnable castle.

The cross-bearer having learnt the cause of the tumult, acquainted the legate that a gentleman of the province had been condemned to death by the Count of Vendôme, from whose castle-dungeon he was about to be conducted to the great entrance of the church, there to make a public confession of his crime. On hearing this, the prelate sprang from off his mule, and ascended the scaffold which had been prepared for the prisoner, and which was raised a little above the level of the square. Let us pause a moment to observe how eagerly this cardinal-archbishop, this patriarch of twenty-six years, availed himself of the opportunity to assist an unknown criminal, and to absolve him *in articulo mortis*. This is but one instance among ten thousand which might be adduced, to prove the ignorance or the prejudice of those writers who maintain that sentiments of humanity and of Christian charity were then utterly extinct among the higher orders of the clergy.

To return to our story. After a few minutes' delay, the condemned gentleman was brought into the square by the men-at-arms of the Count of Vendôme (Louis de Bourbon la Marche), and they were not less surprised than was their unhappy captive, on perceiving the double cross of the cardinal (a Basilican cross, having eight points), with the hundred archers of his guard stationed around the scaffold, upon which was seated a prince of the church, wearing his scarlet hat.

'Most eminent lord,' said the captive gentleman, who was a young man of graceful, yet resolute aspect, 'I thank our gracious God, your Lord and mine, that your paternity is here to receive my dying confession; the count having abused his power so far, as to restrain his almoners and chaplains from approaching me, until the present ceremony should be concluded; desiring to force me to declare myself guilty, and not me only—But this is not a matter to be named in public!—Thus much only will I say, that there is no particle of truth in the charge laid against me by the count. I protest,' continued he, stretching out his hand towards the church—'I protest, in the presence of the Trinity, that I am innocent; and never will I make the confession

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which is required of me. Now, most reverend father in God, be pleased to incline your ear to me, and to bless me before I die. With all humility, I beseech you to grant me this favour"—the young man hesitated, however, to kneel—"for I am a knight, and of noble parentage," said he, looking irresolutely on the ground.

'It is true,' said the Vendôme jailor—"it is true!"

'It is true!' re-echoed the multitude; and the cardinal, observing that he wore the collar of the order of Anjou, spread out one end of his mantle on the scaffold, that the youthful knight might bend his knees upon it.

There was a solemn stillness among the crowd while the sacramental confession and absolution were given and received. Then followed a low dialogue between the confessor and his penitent, wherein the animated and impassioned gestures of the latter seemed ill to agree with the posture he had just quitted. It was evident, from the strong affirmations which were occasionally expressed on his countenance, that he was closely and scrupulously questioned by the prelate, who remained calm and unmoved. At length the cardinal rose up, and the people fell upon their knees.

'Citizens of Vendôme, and you other good people of the country,' said he, in blessing the multitude, 'after having invoked the aid of Him who disposeth the heart of the strong to commiseration, and who guideth the weak into the paths of submission and peace; of Him who planteth the cedar in inaccessible places, and soweth the valleys with flowers; who feedeth the lion and the eagle, as well as the lamb and the dove; we, Antony de Créquy, cardinal-presbyter of the holy Roman Church, tituli Beate Maria Supra Minerva et cætera et cætero-rum, declare unto you, and swear upon the holy Gospels which we hold in our hand, that it is only through fortuitous circumstances, and by unforeseen chance, *sine previsions nec voluntate nostrâ*, that we have arrived in this city at the place and hour of this gentleman's execution; and that we have resolved to discharge, and fully to liberate, the said gentleman and knight, Messire Bénédict de Musset, from the capital punishment to which he has been condemned: making known unto you, that this our will and pleasure is signified in virtue of our right and privilege as cardinal of the holy Roman Church, which right belongeth unto us, according to the ancient and modern usage of this most Christian kingdom of France. And this same we now signify unto you, oh Louis de Bourbon, Count of Marche and Vendôme, through your officers who are here present; and we say unto you, High and mighty lord! deign to let your proud glance rest upon us from the fastnesses of your lofty towers; listen to the prayers of your people, and of us, whose voice is apostolical. Your mountain and castle of St Georges was of yore a Tabor for devotion, and a Parnassus for the Muses; we beseech you not to make it a Lyban for solitude, and a Caucasus for affliction! Return, ye citizens of Vendôme, to your homes in peace, and pray the God of all mercy to fill both you and us with his grace and heavenly benediction.'

'Amen!—amen!' replied a thousand voices. The archers of Créquy formed themselves into a line from the scaffold to the door of the church, where the liberated knight was admitted with the cardinal; and the good people dispersed, crying out, 'Noël!' while the men-at-arms returned precipitately to the castle, to acquaint their lord with what had taken place.

The fortunate Bénédict accompanied his deliverer to Nantes, where, some years later, he married a daughter of the house of Illiers; and their descendants still exist in the Vendômois.

The Count of Vendôme had condemned the knight from an unfounded suspicion of his attachment to the countess, who, says an ancient chronicler, was the most noble and virtuous princess of her time. The count was

so enraged at the Cardinal de Créquy for having liberated his foe, that he instituted a suit against him, which lasted beyond the count's lifetime, and was decided, after his death, in favour of the cardinal. The reconciliation of the two families was cemented by the marriage of Anne de Bourbon Vendôme with Clodino de Créquy, Lord of Heymont, &c.

Before concluding this article, we may observe that the last ecclesiastic who attempted to use the privilege of mercy was the Cardinal de Bourcier; but his claim was disallowed, because he refused to swear that he found himself *by chance* in the street Aux Ours in Paris, when a criminal convicted of sacrilege passed through it on his way to the place of execution. It was a privilege which was most obnoxious both to the kings of France and their parliaments, as they considered it too exorbitant a right for any subject to possess.

THE BURIED TOWN OF PLEURS.

A spot which was to me one of the most interesting in all my rambles, was where the village of Pleurs, with about twenty-five hundred inhabitants, was overwhelmed, in the year 1618, by the falling of a mountain. This terrific avalanche took place in the night, and was so sudden, complete, and overwhelming, that not only every soul perished, but no trace whatever of the village, or of any of the remains of the inhabitants, could afterwards be discovered. The mountain must have buried the town to the depth of several hundred feet. Though the all-veiling gentleness of nature has covered both the mountain that stood and that which fell with luxuriant vegetation, and even a forest of chestnuts has grown amidst the wilderness of the rocks, yet the vastness and the wreck of the avalanche are clearly distinguishable. Enormous angular blocks of rocks are strewn and piled in the wildest confusion possible, some of them being at least sixty feet high. The soil has so accumulated in the space of two hundred years, that on the surface of these ruins there are smooth, grassy fields at intervals, and the chestnuts grow everywhere. A few clusters of miserable hamlets, like Indians' or gipsies' wigwags, are also scattered over the grave of the former village; and there is a forlorn-looking chapel that might serve as a convent for banditti. The mountains rise on either side to a great height in most picturesque peaks and outlines, and the valley is filled up with a snowy range at the north. It was a solemn thing to stand upon the tomb of twenty-five hundred beings, all sepulchred alive! No efforts have ever discovered a trace of the inhabitants—not a bone, not a vestige. It was the Mount Conto that fell; the half that was left behind still rises abrupt and perpendicular over the mighty grave. It is singular enough that the town was situated itself on the tomb of another village, which had previously been overwhelmed by a similar catastrophe. For that reason it was named Pleurs.—The Town of Tears. From the times of old, as often as in Italy one city has been buried, another has been built upon the very same spot, except, indeed, in the case of Pompeii, so that it is no uncommon thing for the same earth to be leased to the dead and the living. The Town of Tears was one of the gayest, richest, laughing, pleasure-loving, joyous little cities in the kingdom. It might have been named Tears, because it had laughed till it cried. It had palaces and villas of rich gentlemen and nobles; for its lovely and romantic situation, and pleasant air, attracted the wealthy families to spend, especially the summer months, in so delightful a retreat. I wonder that no poet or romance writer has made this scene the subject of a thrilling story. The day before the lid of their vast sepulchre fell, the people were as happy and secure as those of Pompeii the night of the Vesuvian eruption—and much more innocent. There had been great rains. Vast masses of gravel were loosened from the mountains, and overwhelmed some rich vineyards. The herdsmen came hurrying in, to give notice that strange movements had been taking place, with alarming symptoms of some great convulsion; that there were great fissures and rents forming in the mountain, and masses of rock falling, just as the cornice of a building might topple down in fragments before the whole wall tumbles. Nevertheless, there was no dream of what was to follow. The storm cleared brightly away; the sun rose and set on the 4th of September as a bridegroom; the people lay down securely to rest, or pur-

* A contraction of Emmanuel, 'God with us,' used by the French as a cry of joy and approbation, resembling the modern *Vive!*

sued their accustomed festivities into the bosom of the night, with the plans for to-morrow; but that night the mountain fell, and destroyed them all. At midnight a great roar was heard far over the country, and a shock felt as of an earthquake, and then a solemn stillness followed; in the morning a cloud of dust and vapour hung over the valley, and the bed of the Maira was dry. The river had been stopped by the falling of the mountain across its channel, and the town of Pleurs, with the village of Celano, had disappeared for ever. All the excavations of all the labourers that could be collected failed to discover a single vestige of the inhabitants or of their dwelling-places. The miners could not reach the cathedral for its gold and jewels; and there they lie at rest, churches and palaces, villas and hovels, priests, peasants, and nobles, where neither gold, nor love, nor superstition, nor piety, can raise them from their graves, or have any power over them.—*Cheever's Pilgrim of the Jungfrau.*

HOOK'S HOAXES.

Hook called, and in the course of conversation gave me an account of his going to Lord Melville's trial with a friend. They went early, and were engaged in conversation when the peers began to enter. At this moment a country-looking lady, whom he afterwards found to be a resident at Rye, in Sussex, touched his arm, and said, 'I beg your pardon, sir, but pray who are those gentlemen in red coming in?' 'Those, ma'am,' returned Theodore, 'are the barons of England; in these cases the junior peers always come first.' 'Thank you, sir—much obliged to you. Louisa, my dear (turning to a girl about fourteen), tell Jane (about ten) those are the barons of England; and the juniors (that is the youngest, you know) always go first. Tell her to be sure and remember that when we get home.' 'Dear me, ma'am!' said Louisa, 'can that gentleman be one of the youngest? I am sure he looks very old.' Human nature, added Hook, could not stand this; any one, though with no more mischief in him than a dove, must have been excited to a hoax. 'And pray, sir,' continued the lady, 'what gentlemen are these?' pointing to the bishops, who came next in order, in the dress which they wear on state occasions—namely, the rochet and lawn sleeves over their doctor's robes. 'Gentlemen, madam!' said Hook; 'these are not gentlemen: these are ladies, elderly ladies—dowager peeresses in their own right.' The fair inquirer fixed a penetrating glance upon his countenance, saying, as plainly as an eye can say, 'Are you quizzing me or no?' Not a muscle moved; till at last, tolerably well satisfied with her scrutiny, she turned round and whispered, 'Louisa, dear, the gentleman says that these are elderly ladies, and dowager peeresses in their own right: tell Jane not to forget that.' All went on smoothly, till the speaker of the House of Commons attracted her attention by the rich embroidery of his robes. 'Pray, sir,' said she, 'and who is that fine-looking person opposite?' 'That, madam,' was the answer, 'is Cardinal Wolsey!' 'No, sir,' cried the lady, drawing herself up, and casting at her informant a look of angry disdain, 'we know a little better than that; Cardinal Wolsey has been dead many a good year.' 'No such thing, my dear madam, I assure you,' replied Hook, with a gravity that must have been almost preternatural; 'it has been, I know, so reported in the country, but without the least foundation; in fact those rascally newspapers will say anything.' The good old gentlewoman appeared thunderstruck, opened her eyes to their full extent, and gasped like a dying carp; *vox fœnalis hæsit*, seizing a daughter with each hand, she hurried, without a word, from the spot.—*Third Series of the Ingoldsby Legends.*

EFFECT OF MINUTE SUBDIVISIONS OF LAND.

The possessions of the inhabitants of the village of Crosville, in the department de l'Eure, are very diminutive, the soil being divided into extremely small parcels, and the lands around the village belonging to the inhabitants of Neufbourg, by whom they are cultivated. Thus beggary, which in the beginning was the resource only of the most wretched, has become the common occupation of the place. They form at this time a sort of mendicant republic, living after the fashion of gipsies, except that each one has his own hut. Marriage has no existence among them; and whoever violates these customs by marrying, is *poséé par les bâtons*, or cudgelled, as a punishment for his infidelity. They are sensible that marriage attaches the individual to his home, and that a vagrant life is necessarily one of debauch.

THE GOLDEN ROSE.

[In ancient Germany it was the custom for a bridegroom to send or bring to his betrothed a golden rose, as a token that he was about to claim her.]

'Sister, wake! 'tis surely morning; listen, I can hear the bees humming underneath the window, in the fragrant lilac-trees. There it comes: that wandering sunbeam I have watched so many a time,

Creeping in the same dark corner at the early morning chime.

'Oh the night is very weary unto those who lie and moan, And who only know the daytime by the slow hours stealing on— By the small blue rift of heaven gleaming through the curtained pane,

By the warbling birds that waken to their daily life again.

'Sister, rise! and let me watch you twisting up your tresses bright: Stand there, just where I can see you, in the early morning light. I will look, and you shall listen, while I tell a wondrous dream Which I dreamt, when these tired eyelids closed at daybreak's cold gray beam.

'Often have I, sighing, told you, how to me there came no more Those sweet dreams that used to haunt me in the first, and time of yore,

When this long and wasting sickness, stealing all my youth and bloom, Turned my eyes from bridal altar to the dark and ghastly tomb.

'It is long since even in slumber I have seen my Wilhelm's face, But last night he looked upon me from his blessed dwelling-place; Not as when I last beheld him—still, and cold, and marble-white— But all radiant as an angel, with his gold hair gleaming bright.

'And he kissed my lips and forehead, as in those dear old days, And his eyes once more bent on me their clear, loving, earnest gaze: Not a word did Wilhelm utter; and my lips, in silence bound By that holy kiss he gave me, could not frame a single sound.

'Then he placed within my bosom, with a smile, the rose of gold; And my heart leaped up within me as I felt his dear arms fold Round me; and a wondrous lightness shot through all this drooping frame,

While above my shoulders budded two bright wings of amber flame.

'In the air we rose together, I and Wilhelm, hand in hand; Like two wandering doves we floated over sea and over land; Higher—till the air grew clearer, and the earth beneath grew dim, And afar we heard the angels chant our glorious nuptial hymn.

'In each other's arms we floated all the blessed stars among, Till I awakened with the music of the skylark's matin song. Sister! tell me now what meaneth this most happy dream of mine?

Weeping, turned away the sister, for too well she knew the sign.

On the wall the sunbeam stealth; gaily hum the laden bees; And the light wind stirs the blossoms in the fragrant lilac-trees; Loudly sings the lark, but breaks not that immovable repose, For the bride has met the bridegroom—Death has brought the golden rose.

D. M. M.

FOSIL SEA-SERPENT.

If naturalists are still undecided as to the living reality of the 'kraken,' or gigantic sea-serpent, there can now be no doubt in regard to its existence in former ages, or at least the existence of an ophidian animal of equally enormous dimensions. Dr Koch, who brought to this country the Missouri mammoth, exhibited in the Egyptian Hall, and now in the British Museum, has also discovered the fossil remains of a serpent of immense size, which he calls the *Hydrarchos*, or monarch of the waters. It is said to possess a vast number of very large vertebrae, and is the most extraordinary specimen of the so-called antediluvian creation extant. It has been exhibited at Berlin, where it is likely to remain, the king having given orders for its purchase, notwithstanding the large price required by the exhibitor.

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